

MINUTES
California Biodiversity Council
September 19, 1996
Mandalay Beach Resort
2101 Mandalay Beach Road
Oxnard, California

Council Members Present

Douglas Wheeler, Resources Agency
Jon Kennedy, U.S. Forest Service
Diana Jacobs, State Lands Commission
Sam Sharp, Southern California Association of Governments
Gary Gilbert, California Department of Forestry
Nancy Huffman, Northern California County Supervisors Association
Bob Shaffer, Bureau of Reclamation
Nita Vail, Department of Food and Agriculture
Ken Stetnika, National Park Service
Wayne White, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Martin Golden, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
Pete Stine, Biological Resources Division, USGS
Bill Maze, San Joaquin Valley Regional Association of County Supervisors
Diane Holcomb, National Resource Conservation Service
Ed Hastey, Bureau of Land Management
Jacqueline Schafer, Department of Fish and Game
Elizabeth Riddle, University of Davis
Chauncey Poston, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Holly Price, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, NOAA
Colonel Lyn Creswell, Department of the Navy
Laurence "Bud" Laurent, South Central Coast Regional Association of County Supervisors
Charles Imbrecht, California Energy Commission
Mike Shulters, U.S. Geological Survey
Jerry Harmon, San Diego Association of Governments
Pat Meehan, Department of Conservation
Jane Diamond, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Robert Meacher, Regional Council of Rural County Supervisors

Call to Order

Doug Wheeler called the meeting to order thanking the community for the warm welcome that the Council received. The focus of this meeting is on watershed activity and landscape scale planning. People of the region have been invited to present their case histories, including some failures and considerable successes.

Special Presentation

The Mayor of the City of Oxnard, Manual Lopez, presented a commendation to the California Biodiversity Council from the City Council of the City of Oxnard. The commendation recognized the Council for uniting local, state, and federal agencies in the effort to protect our state's natural resources.

Approval of Minutes for the June 7, 1996 Meeting in Nevada City

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Report of Executive Committee

Al Wright reported that one year ago, the Strategic Plan was developed and approved by the Council. There is a need to focus on whether adjustments should be made in the future.

Regional Managers Forums

The purpose is to involve managers with locals on improving collaborative partnerships. Through active participation by Bill Maze, the regional managers forum met with RCRC and received overwhelming support. Sacramento-Mother Lode Regional Association of County Supervisors expressed their support. A meeting is scheduled with the San Joaquin Valley Regional Association of County Supervisors. Once the support of those associations is secure, a planning group will be formed with the County Supervisors and an outline on how to proceed will follow. The leadership and support from local government is exciting and is viewed as a trend for the future.

Staff Orientation Workshops

Feedback from groups throughout the state regarding their watershed projects, successes and failures will be collected through a series of workshops. These workshops will begin next year involving local people and learning about how effective they have been in spending the resources.

Budget

Invoices have been sent to collect the annual fee of \$3,250 to help support the newsletter and logistical costs of Council meetings.

Science Coordinating Committee

Susan Cochrane spoke about the Science Coordinating Committee. Under Anne Kinsinger's leadership, this committee is designed to improve information for decision makers, increase consistency, and to meet information needs in the realm of information exchange and data sharing and research. The idea is to help existing efforts and work with partners within the agencies and outside groups, such as the California Environmental Research Evaluation System (CERES). This system will be coordinated with existing technical teams such as for the

California Vegetation Classification Project. Pilot projects will be used to create consistency and standards of centralized database for the state. All agencies should be able to work on one database rather than each keeping their own data separately. The Council was asked to review the information provided in the packets and respond with any suggestions by the end of the month.

Education and Outreach Committee

Chris Chrystal, writer, editor, and producer of Biodiversity News, introduced the first information kit. The Committee's task is to get the word out to the public about the Council's different programs and projects that are happening around the state. The information kit also contains a copy of the newsletter.

Dissemination of the information kit to a wide range of interests is a priority. Suggestions for that are welcomed. A second edition will be released this fall and will be tailored for educators and teachers. Included in the second edition will be a colored poster of the bioregions for teachers to hang in their classrooms, conferences, or for appropriate display.

Council Announcements

Assembly Bill 1890

Chairman Wheeler brought Assembly Bill 1890 to the Council's attention noting that this bill, currently on the Governor's desk awaiting signature, would make the utility companies in California more competitive and ultimately reduce rates. A meeting has been convened to begin discussions among the agencies who are working closely with the California Energy Commission.

California Energy Commission Chairman Imbrecht gave his views on this most complex and significant piece of legislation. The bill is all encompassing and will change the nature of electric utility service in California. The Energy Commission has been faced with at least a dozen new responsibilities under this legislation, which mostly have a very short time frame. Upon signing of this bill, there is a great opportunity not only to enhance the environmental quality in California, but also should set lower rates.

Outdoor Recreation

Donald Murphy, Director of Department of Parks and Recreation, convened a group of retailers, manufacturers, and agencies to focus on outdoor recreation in California and a news release was issued regarding the formation of the California recreation roundtable.

Status of the Guide to Stream Project Permitting for the State of California

Chauncey Poston, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, gave a brief status report on the *Guide to Stream Project Permitting*. The guide was produced by the California Association of Resource Conservation District's Water Quality Task Force. It was partially funded by the State Water Resources Control Board. This handbook is a wonderful resource for those who have projects going on and is user friendly. Additional volumes are available.

Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP)

A recent meeting was held to discuss the environmental quality incentives program that has come out of the new farm bill. Rules have not been published yet, but are expected any day.

Status on the California Spotted Owl

Jon Kennedy, USDA Forest Service, reported that the USDA Forest Service was poised to issue a revised draft of the environmental statement for the California spotted owl. A decision was made by the Clinton administration to defer publication of the environmental impact statement. A committee will be established by the Secretary of Agriculture to review the linkages between the California spotted owl report and the SNEP report. A report from the committee is due in February.

CRMP announcements

Gary Gilbert, announced the release of a newly revised handbook. Two conferences are scheduled on Coordinated Resource Management Programs. One will be for the Southern California region on January 17-18, 1997. The focus of this conference will be watershed groups and if they can make a difference in natural resources. The annual conference is scheduled for May 22-23, 1997 in Santa Cruz County.

County appointment

Nancy Huffman, Chairman of the RCRC Group, announced that Robert Meacher has been appointed to the Bay Delta Advisory Council and will represent the northern counties in their effort to develop a better watershed plan.

Watershed Planning and Management: Balancing the Needs of Growing Human Populations with Protection of the Natural Environment

Maggie Kildee, Ventura County Board of Supervisors, introduced her panel and gave a couple of brief comments. Watershed management play a very big role in our state. The two panelists are Carl Blum and Peter Brand.

The Santa Clara River Enhancement Project

Carl Blum, Deputy Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, showed slides of the 100-mile river. This particular river has the mix of opportunities for growth, shifting growth, and no growth. Public meetings were held for almost a year. It was decided that a corridor plan should be the start of a larger plan. The Project Steering Committee will develop and seek support for a dynamic long-range enhancement and management plan for the Santa Clara River. The process will focus on improving coordination and information exchange among all of the steering committee members and on resolving conflicting uses along the river. The study will give consideration to habitat objectives, natural river processes, private property rights, economic interests, and community objectives in support of preparing a plan that contains mechanisms for implementing the steering committee's recommendations.

Five critical issues along the river have been defined: biological resources, flood protection, aggregate resources, water resources, and recreation. Reports have been completed on all five issues. These reports will be used for identifying overlays where there are competing interests on various parts of the river. The goal is to have a consensus on moving forward. Key issues that face this committee are ongoing funding, trust, flexibility, and interaction with the regulatory agencies.

The Calleguas Watershed Project

Peter Brand, Coastal Conservancy, opened discussion on the Calleguas Watershed Project and Santa Ynez Watershed Project. One of the best ways to share information is through CERES and the California Watershed Project inventory. The inventory covers all of watershed projects in California. The Conservancy has completed maps of 422 projects on the coast. The Calleguas Watershed Management Task Force was formed and is facilitated by Rick Alexander.

The Santa Ynez Watershed Project

Peter Brand described historical and current information for the area. County Supervisor Maggie Kildee expressed the need for everyone to work together and to ensure accurate information be available for the people who are impacted by it.

Panel Discussion - Perspectives on the lessons learned from local watershed projects

Steve Treanor, District Superintendent for the Channel Coast District, Department Parks and Recreation, moderated this section.

Perspectives from an environmental organization

Jan Scow, California Native Plant Society, stated his mission is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education and conservation. He expressed the need to recognize that the major threat to any watershed is over-urbanization and that good planning can reduce this threat. He suggested supporting watershed level planning over flood plain planning efforts. The watershed includes various types of habitat not just riparian habitat.

Perspectives from an agricultural land owner

Link Leavens of Leavens Ranches explained his views and perspective as a landowner. As the watershed management programs develop for each of the three major tributaries in Santa Barbara and Ventura County, the process needs to look for balance in its jurisdictional positioning. Frequently the planning process is used as a restrictive tool by various agencies. People are the solution and people are the problem. It is very difficult for the taxpaying landowner to willingly submit in good faith to negotiations when the process of discussion lacks his ability to work on preventative measures that have historically been beneficial.

The farmers have always been environmentalists. They alone work with the soil to produce the commodities enjoyed at the supermarket. They live in their environment and

understand the repercussions of poor management and practices. They live in an age where information is vital to our survival and provide incentives for better stewardship.

Perspectives from a regulatory agency

Cathy "Cat" Brown, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, shared her perspective on the watershed plans through slides. In the last few years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has listed as threatened or endangered numerous species which are native to Southern California's rivers and riparian habitats. If the river is to maintain its dynamic nature, then those species and other critical elements need to be protected. The issues are too complex to resolve ad hoc.

There is no cookbook for watershed planning, most importantly is that it be local. Plans are driven by landowners and local governments. The regulatory agencies have a role, but it is adversary. Better solutions can be found if everyone works together.

Discussion of the Pitch Canker Disease

Gary Kelley, City of Carmel By the Bay, reported on the progress of the task force. Pitch Canker was first discovered in California in 1986 in Santa Cruz. At that time, only 100 trees were infected. Today, this disease is in 17 counties in California ranging from San Diego to Mendocino. This is a very fast spreading disease. The movement of the pathogens can move in a variety of ways. Vectors carry short distances. The pathogens move throughout the state via logs, firewood, wood chips, etc. The task force does not know what the ultimate outcome of this disease will be, but it is clear the disease has not reached its limit yet in distribution or impact. It is prudent to assume that this disease could have a significant economic impact on the state.

Public Comments

Roma Armbrust asked participants to visit the display which indicates all the member organizations that make up Ormond Beach.

Adjournment

A special meeting for the Council is on October 21-22, 1996, and the next regular meeting of the Council is the annual Sacramento meeting on December 12.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.